

III.—*Ornithological Notes from Afghanistan.*—No. II. *On the Birds of the Hariab District.* By R. G. WARDLAW RAMSAY, F.Z.S., Memb. B.O.U., Lieut. 67th Regiment.

AN unexpected return to England has defeated the plan I had in view of periodically transmitting my notes and remarks on the ornithology of Afghanistan to the pages of 'The Ibis.'

I venture now, however, to present to its readers a list of the birds observed and obtained during my sojourn in that country.

The situation of the particular portion of Afghan territory to which my researches were restricted has already been briefly described (*vide* Ibis, 1879, pp. 444, 445).

The marches through the Kurrum valley to our destination were of too hurried a nature to admit of much attention being devoted to its ornithology; so I have, in general, refrained from referring to birds there observed, as specimens were not collected, and consequently identifications would, in many cases, be mere conjectures and therefore of little or no value.

The climate of the valley where our troops, under Major-General Sir F. Roberts, were encamped during the spring and summer of 1879 is very pleasant during the summer months, the heat at no time being very great. During the winter, however, the cold is intense, as is testified by our troops who took part in the early stage of the campaign. Until the end of April we had continual falls of snow, and the weather was bitterly cold. It is therefore not surprising that the number of species found in the valley in that month should be very small, and almost entirely composed of non-migratory birds, such as the Paridæ and the Emberizinae, the Himalayan Creeper, and the Sittinae. The country being almost entirely covered with pine-forests, except where cleared for cultivation, is an additional reason for the poverty of species in the valley.

On reference to the Survey map of the country, it will be seen that the Kurrum valley proper is divided from that

of Hariab by a long spur thrown out from Sita Rām, or Speen-gurh, as it is called by the Afghans, the highest point of the Safed-Koh range. This spur, over which runs the Peiwar Kotul, at first takes a southerly direction, but eventually turns away to the west, and appears to lose itself near the junction of the Kurrum and Hariab rivers, but not before it again approaches another spur of the Safed-Koh, which also turns to the southward, the general direction of the main range being nearly east and west.

It will thus be seen that the small part of the country known as the Hariab valley is enclosed in a kind of basin in the hills at an average elevation of from 7000 to 8000 feet above the sea-level. The Peiwar spur presents a considerable barrier to the advance of many species of birds; that is to say, many birds, such as *Muscipeta paradisi*, *Oriolus kundoo*, *Acridotheres tristis*, *Corvus corax*, *Corvus splendens*, *Ceryle rudis*, *Ortygornis ponticeriana*, &c., which occur up to the very foot of the Peiwar spur on the east, are, as far as my experience goes, unknown in the Hariab valley, which is approximately about 1500 to 2000 feet higher.

Another instance may be quoted in the King Crow (*Buchanga atra*), which is very abundant near the head of the Kurrum valley, but which is of rare occurrence in the higher valley. There is no doubt, therefore, that the climate of Hariab, albeit its elevation is not very much above that of the Kurrum valley, keeps out a considerable number of species, and consequently impoverishes the list of its birds.

The total number of species observed between the 12th April and the 10th July was seventy-three, not including the species obtained or observed at Shalofzan (in the Kurrum valley) only, which amount to thirteen more, and those of whose occurrence I only know by report, viz. *Lophophorus impeyanus* and *Rhynchæa capensis*, making a grand total of eighty eight.

In this paper I have followed the numbering of Jerdon's 'Birds of India,' according to the revised list published by Mr. A. O. Hume ('Stray Feathers,' viii. pp. 73-122).

I hope, in course of time, to augment the present list, as

I have made arrangements for collections to be made for me if circumstances shall permit.

(7) *GYPÆTUS BARBATUS* (Linn.).

The Lämmergeyer is very abundant, and, indeed, is the only Vulture which occurs in the Hariab district. *Neophron ginginianus* occurs in the Kurrum valley.

(8) *FALCO PEREGRINUS*, Tunst.

I once saw a Falcon which appeared to belong to this species.

(17) *FALCO TINNUNCULUS*, Linn.

Common. Breeding in May.

(24) *ACCIPITER NISUS* (Linn.).

Once observed.

(56) *MILVUS GOVINDA*, Sykes.

I refer the Afghan Kite provisionally to this species, not having obtained a specimen. It was next to useless to collect large birds, owing to the difficulty of getting even the smallest packages transported.

(45) *BUTEO FEROX*.

Accipiter ferox, S. G. Gmelin, Nov. Comm. Acad. Petrop. xv. p. 442, pl. x. (1770).

Buteo ferox, Sharpe, Cat. Birds, vol. i. p. 176, pl. viii.

Buteo nigricans, Severtzoff (vide Ibis, 1875, p. 103).

The only specimen I obtained was a nestling, still partly in down, brought to me by an Afghan in July at Byan Kheyl, in the Hariab valley.

Numerous different opinions having been urged as to the plumage of this Buzzard in the young and adult plumages respectively (*conf.* Sharpe, *loc. cit.*; Gurney, Ibis, 1876, p. 367; and Dresser, B. of E. pt. 38), I will subjoin a brief description of the specimen in question. It is in the melanistic plumage which occurs in specimens from the northwest, and which has been described by Severtzoff from Turkestan as *B. nigricans* (*loc. cit.*). Throughout of a blackish brown, deepest on the head, quill-feathers, abdomen, and lower tail-coverts; the feathers on the crown with a black

streak down their centres. The tail-feathers are pale-shafted, and of the same dark brown colour above, but with four or five pale transverse bars on each of the feathers, which are also tipped pale and are pale grey beneath. Cere and legs yellow. Wing about 12 inches, tarsus 3.

A pair of these Buzzards had a nest on a ledge of a steep cliff near our camp. I failed to obtain the parent birds, but believe that the specimen above described belonged to this nest.

I am indebted to Mr. J. H. Gurney for identifying the specimen.

(66) *SYRNIUM NIVICOLA*, Hodgs.

Once or twice flushed, but no specimen obtained.

(82) *HIRUNDO RUSTICA*, Linn.

Observed in the Kurrum valley only.

(84) *HIRUNDO FILIFERA*, Steph.

The Wire-tailed Swallow probably occurs in the Hariab district, although I cannot recollect having seen it. I found both these last species in the Kurrum valley.

HIRUNDO RUFULA.

Hirundo rufula, Temm. Man. d'Orn. iii. p. 298.

The Afghan bird belongs to the western form. It agrees with specimens collected on Mount Tabor by Dr. Tristram, and in Greece (*Howard Saunders*).

All my specimens from Murree are referable to the closely allied *H. erythropygia*, Sykes. Mr. Dresser, in differentiating the latter species from *H. rufula* (B. of E. pt. 37), says, "the black on the crown joins that on the back, the red collar not extending round the neck." This statement would be correct in the case of the still more eastern form, *H. striolata*, Temm., from Flores, Formosa, China, and Karen-nee; but in a very large series of the Indian bird from different localities, in no instance (in which the neck-feathers are in good order) is the collar imperfect.

(91) *COTILE RUPESTRIS* (Scop.).

Hirundo rupestris, Scopoli, Ann. I. Hist. Nat. p. 167, no. 253 (1769).

The Crag-Martin was abundant in the valley in June, and apparently nesting in the cliffs near our camp. The only specimen preserved is very markedly paler in every way than a specimen from Jericho, but agrees with it in measurements. It is in colour more like *C. fuligula*, Hartlaub, from South Africa. It is not *Cotile obsoleta*, Cabanis.

(99) *CYPSELUS APUS*.

Cypselus apus, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 344 (1766).

Cypselus pekinensis, Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1870, p. 435.

The Common Swift was very abundant in our part of Afghanistan, more especially about the summits of the mountains. On Matungi (12,600 feet), an offshoot of the Safed-Koh, I found them in great numbers, darting and shrieking round the rocks at the summit.

(120) *MEROPS PERSICUS*, Pallas.

I never obtained this Bee-eater, but observed large parties in process of migration at the end of April and beginning of May (*vide* Ibis, 1879, p. 446).

(121) *MEROPS APIASTER*.

Merops apiaster, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 182 (1766).

I first observed the European Bee-eater on the 5th June, after which it became quite common in the Hariab valley. On the 22nd of the same month I found it very common between Kurrum fort and the Peiwar Kotul, where neither trees nor shrubs are to be seen for miles. The birds were sitting on the ground and darting up at insects occasionally. In Dresser's 'Birds of Europe,' pt. lxiv., a note by Mr. W. Blanford shows that he has observed the same thing in Beluchistan. Up to the 10th July, when I left the Kurrum valley, these birds were not breeding; nor, indeed, did I see any place at all suitable for the purpose.

Surgeon-Major Aitchison, of the Indian Medical Department, the botanist to the Kurrum Expedition, informed me that in a village near the base of the Safed-Koh the villagers said that sometimes in the month of June, when the Bee-eaters arrive, they come down in great numbers to rob the bees from the hives, and that the people had to keep con-

tinually on the watch to drive them off. The natives also say that the Bee-eaters do not remain long; so that it is possible that they may go elsewhere to breed.

(123) *CORACIAS INDICUS* (Linn.).

I did not obtain specimens, but am nearly certain that the bird in the Hariab district is referable to this species, and not to *C. garrulus*. It was not common.

(136) *CERYLE RUDIS* (Linn.).

I have never seen a Kingfisher of any sort in any part of the Hariab valley, although streams are numerous and fish abound. This species, however, is common on the Kurrum river.

(154) *PICUS HIMALAYENSIS*.

Picus himalayensis, J. & S. Ill. Orn. pl. 116.

Afghan examples agree with Himalayan. This is the only Woodpecker that I found in the Hariab district, where it was very abundant and breeding. The young birds had flown by the beginning of June.

(199) *CUCULUS CANORUS*, Linn.

The European Cuckoo was exceedingly abundant in the Hariab valley, arriving about the beginning of May. I did not hear it myself before the 15th of that month.

(243) *CERTHIA HIMALAYANA*.

Certhia himalayana, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 174.

The Barred-tailed Tree-creeper of the Safed-Koh appears to agree best with the above species; but its coloration is generally more grey and less rufous, and the tips of some of the primaries are white and not rufous. These distinctions, Mr. Dresser has, I think, satisfactorily shown (B. of E. pt. xxx.), will not hold good. Mr. Brooks (J. A. S. B. 1872, p. 74) describes his *Certhia hodgsoni* as differing from *C. familiaris*, Linn., in much the same details as my Afghan bird differs from *C. himalayana*, Vigors.

The Tree-creeper was common enough on the Peiwar range and on the adjoining slopes of the Safed-Koh, where it was evidently breeding in June.

(248 bis) *SITTA CASHMIRIENSIS*.

Sitta cashmiriensis, Brooks, P. A. S. B. 1871, p. 209 ; J. A. S. B. 1872, p. 75.

Sitta cinnamomeiventris of my first paper (Ibis, 1879, p. 447).

It is not without some doubts that I refer the Hariab Nuthatch to the above species. It agrees fairly well with the brief description given by Mr. Brooks (*loc. cit.*) ; but I have specimens from Murree (*Biddulph*) which agree still better with his description, and which, in turn, do not agree so well with my Afghan bird.

The description of my bird runs as follows:—"Upper surface bluish slate-colour, including the two centre tail-feathers, which have no white upon them. Breast bright rufescent, shading into deep chestnut-red on the belly and lower tail-coverts, which are without white edgings, and into white or whitish rufescent on the throat, checks, and ear-coverts. A black line, 1·75 inch long, runs from the base of the maxilla over the eye onto the upper back. Quills brown, faintly margined with bluish slate on the outer web, and becoming white on the inner web towards the base. Rectrices brown, the two outer ones having a broad white bar on the inner web and another higher up on the outer, the next two plain, but tipped with greyish white. The bill is very slender and slightly recurved. Bill from gape ·95 inches, tarsus ·7, wing 3·35, tail 2. Bill dark slate-colour ; gonyes albescent."

This Nuthatch is the common one of the southern slopes of the Safed-Koh, and was breeding in the Hariab district in May. By the middle of June all the young had flown.

(249) *SITTA LEUCOPSIS*.

Sitta leucopsis, Gould, P. Z. S. 1849, p. 113.

The White-cheeked Nuthatch is rather common on the Peiwar spur of the Safed-Koh. I observed it hanging about a nest-hole on the 21st May, but on returning to take the eggs some days later was unable to find the tree. I have not observed this Nuthatch below an elevation of 7000 feet, which is about the lowest limit of pine-growth in these parts. On

the 21st June I shot a young bird just fledged near the Peiwar Kotul. The iris of this species is brown; maxilla black, as also the margin and point of the mandible, the remainder of which is whitish horny; legs brownish green.

(254) *UPUPA EPOPS*, Linn.

The Hoopoe was not very common. It was breeding in June.

(257). *LANIUS ERYTHRONOTUS* (Vigors).

Very common. I found a great many nests in May and June. The first (27th May) was situated in the centre of a dense thorny creeper, and contained six eggs, white, faintly washed with pale green, and spotted and blotched with purplish stone-colour and pale brown. The nest was composed of green grass, moss, cotton-wool, thistle-down, rags, cow's hair, mule's hair, shreds of juniper bark, &c. &c. Other nests were found in willows by the river-bank and in apricot-trees. In a large orchard at Shalofzan, in the Kurrum valley, I found three nests within a few yards of one another.

(260) *LANIUS VITTATUS* (Valenc.).

Once or twice observed.

(273) *PERICROCOTUS BREVIROSTRIS*, Vigors.

Common.

(278) *BUCHANGA ATRA*.

Muscicapa atra, Hermann, Obs. Zool. p. 208.

Buchanga longicaudata, A. Hay (laps. cal. *albicaudata*) apud Wardl.-Rams., Ibis, 1879, p. 447.

This King-Crow is extremely common to the very base of the Peiwar Kotul, but is apparently very scarce in the higher valley of Hariab. It was especially abundant in the orchards at Shalofzan, in the Kurrum valley, in June, where it was apparently breeding; but I did not find the nest.

(288) *MUSCIPETA PARADISI*.

Muscicapa paradisi, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 107.

The Indian Paradise Flycatcher is not found, as far as I know, in the Hariab valley; but among the orchards at Shalofzan, in the Kurrum valley, it is especially abundant.

I found it there in June, evidently breeding. A male in the red-and-white dress had the testes much developed.

This is another of the many instances observed of birds being stopped by so small a barrier as the Peiwar range. It is not as if suitable places were wanting in the Hariab valley; for well-watered orchards are of frequent occurrence there.

(296) *HEMICHELIDON SIBIRICA*.

Muscicapa sibirica, Gmel. Syst. Nat. i. p. 935.

Hemichelidon fuliginosus, Hodgs.; Jerdon, B. Ind. i. p. 458.

Breeding in May and June. I have found this bird up to the limit of the pine-growth on the Safed-Koh.

(299 *bis*) *BUTALIS GRISOLA*.

Muscicapa grisola, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 328 (1766).

Arrived in the Hariab valley about the middle of May, after which time it became very abundant, frequenting the valleys among the pine-forests, and also the apricot-orchards, which abound near all streams in this part of Afghanistan.

I found the nest on the 3rd June, high up on a hill-side, at about 8000 feet. It was situated in the lowest fork of an edible pine (*Pinus gerardiana*), about six feet from the ground. The nest was composed of shreds of the bark of the juniper-tree, without any lining, except a few feathers, and contained four eggs, quite fresh, pale green, profusely freckled with light brown, especially towards the thick end. The position of this nest was rather unusual; but another I found was in a crevice of a ragged juniper stump.

(307) *CYORNIS RUFICAUDA*.

Muscicapa ruficauda, Swains. Nat. Libr. x. (Flycatchers) p. 251.

The Rufous-tailed Flycatcher is one of the commonest birds in the Hariab valley, extending far up (I have shot it at nearly 11,000 feet) on the Safed-Koh. It is about the last bird that is found in any abundance where the pine-growth ceases. Common, and breeding, as it was in May, June, and July, I never had the luck to find its nest.

Iris reddish brown ; bill pale horny brown, margined with yellow, interior yellow ; legs slaty brown. Sexes alike.

(310) *MUSCICAPULA SUPERCILIARIS*.

Muscicapa superciliaris, Jerdon, Madr. Journ. xi. p. 16.

I came across one pair on the Peiwar Kotul at about 8000 feet, of which the male only was obtained. This specimen agrees with examples from Kotgurh, Murree, Simla, and the Sutlej valley in the Tweeddale collection.

(351) *PETROCOSSYPHUS CYANUS* (Linn.).

A few pairs remained throughout the summer, and doubtless were breeding ; but I did not find the nest.

(353) *OREOCETES CINCHLORHYNCHUS*.

Petrocincla cinclorhynchus, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1830, p. 172.

Arrived in the valley about the beginning of May, after which time it was abundant, and generally to be found near small rocky mountain-streams in the pine-forests. It was, I think, breeding in June.

(368) *TURDUS VISCIVORUS*, Linn.

Turdus hodgsoni, v. Homeyer, Rhea, ii. p. 150.

On the 22nd May I found a nest containing four young birds nearly fledged. The nest was situated in a small deodar, about four feet from the ground, and seemed in every respect like that of a Blackbird in England. I returned a few days after to the spot, but found the nest gone ; it had been taken by a soldier, in whose possession I found it afterwards. He kept the young birds for about a fortnight, when they died. I, however, was able to determine the species for certain. The cry of the Missel-Thrush was only heard on one other occasion ; so I fancy it is rare.

(470) *ORIOLES KUNDUO*, Sykes.

Orioles were extremely rare in the Hariab valley at (least such was my experience), notwithstanding that they are so abundant on the other side of the Peiwar Kotul in the orchards of the Kurrum valley. At Shalofzan, in the Kurrum valley, in June, I found them in great numbers : some were breeding ; but as I saw quite young birds, it is probable that the nesting-season was nearly over.

(483) PRATINCOLA MAURA.

Motacilla maura, Pall., Reise Russ. Reichs. ii. Anh., p. 708.

Pratincola maura (Pallas), Sharpe, Cat. Birds, iv. p. 188.

Pratincola indica, Blyth; Wardl.-Rams. Ibis, 1879, p. 446.

This Stonechat is certainly about the commonest of all birds in this part of Afghanistan. As other people have before remarked, these birds vary much in the same locality; and so do their eggs. Some females have the throat, belly, vent, and upper tail-coverts nearly white, whilst others have the throat and belly tinged with brown, and the breast and upper tail-coverts with ferruginous. Whether it is a constant fact or not, I am unable to say; but it is worth remarking that, in several cases in which I shot the female at the nest, the bird with the ferruginous upper tail-coverts and breast had pale blue eggs, only minutely freckled with nearly obsolete pale reddish-brown spots, and the other above-mentioned variety had its eggs densely marked with freckles of reddish brown, especially at the thicker end. The nests were always placed on the ground, and generally on the steep slopes of the hill-sides.

(490) SAXICOLA MORIO.

Saxicola morio, Ehr. Symb. Phys. "Egypt and Arabia."

All the specimens collected in Afghanistan are, I think, referable to this species, having the inner webs of the primaries of the same colour as the outer, and not white as in *S. leucomela*, Pall.

Taking the white inner webs of the primaries as the distinction, I find that in a large series in the Tweeddale collection one specimen only can be attributed to *Saxicola leucomela*, Pall., which was collected on the shores of the Dead Sea by Dr. Tristram, and that all the rest, without exception, chiefly from Central Asia, Lahore, and Umballah, are *S. morio*. In addition to the russet under tail-coverts of *S. leucomela*, I may point out that it may be also distinguished by the shafts of the primaries being white at the base, showing

* Since the above was in print I have examined the series of *S. leucomela* and *S. morio* in the collections of Messrs. Seebohm and Dresser, and find that this character is not constant, as many examples of *S. morio* have the shafts at the base of the primaries white.

a white spot on the outside of the wing, just at the tips of the wing-coverts.

The colouring of the head in *S. morio* and *S. leucomela* cannot be taken as a guide. I have specimens of *Saxicola morio*, shot in April and May (when they commenced to breed in the Hariab valley), with the head almost brown, white washed with brown, and pure white. The plumage of the body varies with that of the head; for the bird with the white head has the upper surface and throat rich black, and, again, those with the heads brown or brownish have the back in a corresponding degree brown or black mottled with brown. These latter birds were adult, although they had not assumed the full black-and-white plumage; for they were breeding in May and June.

Two females shot on the 9th May I feel sure belong to this species, inasmuch as they were in company with males of *S. morio*.

The only one which I was able to preserve was of a uniform clear earthy brown on the head, wings, and back, the rump and upper tail-coverts being white as in the male. The tail is also as in the male, except that the black is replaced by brown. Beneath the throat black as in the male, but each feather margined with pale russet, giving it a mottled appearance. The breast and lower parts are buffy white, the former having a decided tinge of russet, somewhat in the form of a pectoral band.

The head, which only is visible, of the female in Mr. Gould's plate of *Dromolea picata* (B. of Asia, pt. xvii.) is evidently taken from a female *S. morio*.

I may mention that day after day, whilst out road-making, I have watched pairs of these birds, and invariably there was one black and one brown bird.

The nest is very difficult to find; and I have sat sometimes for half an hour or more, hoping that the birds would give some indication of its whereabouts. The only nest secured contained but one egg, of a pale unspotted blue, otherwise like a large Stonechat's (*Pratincola maura*) egg. The nest was placed under a collection of small rocks piled up by the

torrent in the then dried-up bed of a mountain-stream. A considerable number of huge stones had to be removed before the nest could be got at. Near Attock, in the Punjâb, on the march up, I obtained *S. morio* (?), *S. opistholeuca*, Strickland, *S. deserti*, Rüpp.; and in the Khyber Pass I saw *S. picata*, evidently breeding, at the end of March.

(497) *RUTICILLA RUFIVENTRIS*.

Ænanthe rufiventris, Vicill. Nouv. Dict. xxi. p. 431.

At 12,500 feet on the Safed Koh, on the 1st of July, I observed a pair of Redstarts hanging about an old tree-stump; I shot the male, and on searching the stump found the nest in a crevice; but, unfortunately, it contained no eggs. The nest had the appearance of having been used; so that it is possible that the young had flown.

The specimen shot is what I take to be a full-plumaged *Ruticilla rufiventris*. The crown of the head and the nape are of a dark ashy grey, the feathers on these parts presenting a strangely worn appearance, the shafts being quite denuded of web near the tips; the forehead, sides of head, throat, back, and upper part of breast being jet-black; the rump, upper and lower tail-coverts, tail, and remainder of lower surface being rufous-chestnut. The wing measured 3·2 inches.

This specimen does not differ from other Indian examples shot towards the end of the year, except in the intensity of the black and the slate-colour of the head being rather brighter.

It corresponds with the plate of *R. erythroprocta*, Gould (B. of Asia, pt. viii.), excepting that the black on the lower surface does not descend beyond the upper part of the breast.

Referring to the latter species, Mr. Hume remarks (Lahore to Yarkand, p. 209) that the amount of black varies in individuals and is of no specific value. That the extent of black varies much is amply shown by the series of *R. rufiventris* before me; but I do not possess a specimen in which the black descends so far as the abdomen, as is depicted in Mr. Gould's drawing of *R. erythroprocta*.

I never saw a true Redstart on the Safed Koh or in the Hariab valley but on this one occasion.

(504) *ADELURA CÆRULEOCEPHALA*.

Phænicura cæruleocephala, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1830, p. 35.

Ruticilla lugens, Severtzoff, Stray Feathers, iii. p. 428 (autumn plumage).

This bird was tolerably common in the valley when we arrived in April. It breeds in May and June. On the 22nd of May I found a nest in a crevice in the face of a precipitous cliff in a deep mountain-gorge. It was composed of small twigs and dried grass, thickly lined with camel's hair. I shot the female as she left the nest, which contained five fresh eggs of a dull cream-colour, with a broad zone of the same colour, but darker, near the thicker end.

It is somewhat strange that Bonaparte, who in all probability never saw this bird alive, should have fallen into the error of classing it among the Flycatchers, to which, I should say, it has no structural affinity, albeit its habits are far more like those of a Flycatcher than of a Redstart.

A young bird, apparently about a month old, which I shot on the Peiwar range on the 21st of June is throughout of a pale greyish brown tinged with rufous, and each feather margined black; the primaries dark brown; a broad edging of white on the outer web of the secondaries, which become sullied with rufous towards their tips; tail dark brown.

(514) *CYANECULA SUECICA*.

Motacilla suecica, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 336.

The Bluethroats were so common in April and the commencement of May that I thought they were going to breed in the valley; but they had all disappeared by the 14th May.

(515) *ACROCEPHALUS BRUNNESCENS*.

Acrobates brunnescens, Jerdon, Madr. Journ. x. p. 269.

One specimen only, shot on the 21st May, probably passing through. I never saw the species again.

Iris pale yellowish brown; maxilla dark brown, mandible albescent; legs slaty brown.

Length 7.5 inches.

(516) *ACROCEPHALUS DUMETORUM*, Blyth.

One specimen obtained out of a pair observed on the 13th May—probably migrating; for I never met with the species again.

Iris pale yellowish brown; maxilla dark, mandible pale; legs pale brownish, soles greenish white.

Length 5·75, wing 2·50 inches.

A. agricola (Jerdon), according to that author, appears to have been obtained in Afghanistan; but I did not meet with it (B. of I. ii. p. 156).

(554) *PHYLLOSCOPUS* * *TRISTIS*, Blyth.

Phylloscopus tristis, Blyth, Seebohm, Ibis, 1877, p. 97.

One female, obtained on the 26th May at Byan Kheyl.

(560) *PHYLLOSCOPUS VIRIDANUS*.

Phylloscopus viridanus, Blyth, J. A. S. B. xii. p. 967; Seebohm, Ibis, 1877, p. 73.

Phylloscopus plumbeitarsus, Swinhoe, Ibis, 1861, p. 330.

One example shot at Byan Kheyl on the 28th June.

Mr. Seebohm informs me that, in his matured opinion, *P. plumbeitarsus*, Swinhoe, is identical with Blyth's species.

(562) *PHYLLOSCOPUS INDICUS* (Jerdon).

Phylloscopus indicus, Jerdon, Seebohm, Ibis, 1877, p. 87.

Common. It was breeding throughout May and June; but the eggs were not obtained.

(566 *bis*) *PHYLLOSCOPUS SUBVIRIDIS*.

Reguloides subviridis, Brooks, P. A. S. B. 1872, p. 148; Seebohm, Ibis, 1877, p. 106.

Common in the Hariab valley. A female shot on the 20th May contained eggs ready for laying.

Iris dark brown; bill horn-colour, paler beneath; legs pale brown.

(582) *SYLVIA AFFINIS*, Blyth.

Arrived in Hariab about the beginning of May. It was very common and was breeding by the 27th May. All the

* I am indebted to Mr. Seebohm for determining the specimens of this genus in my collection.

nests found were shallow cups, composed entirely of dried grass, and situated in small bushes, frequently juniper, about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the ground. The eggs vary much both in size and colour—some being long ovals, nearly pure white, spotted with pale brown towards the larger end, and others of a much rounder form, and a pale greenish white, thickly spotted in a broad zone near the thicker end and smeared with very pale brown, or else spotted and smeared with olive-brown over the whole of the thicker end.

(592) *MOTACILLA (CALOBATES) MELANOPE*.

Motacilla melanope, Pall. Reis. Russ. Reichs, iii. p. 696.

This Wagtail was common throughout the summer, and commenced to breed in May.

On the 5th June I found a nest in the roots of a tree which was lying in the dry bed of the stream near our camp; it contained four young ones just hatched and one addled egg, which I secured with the old bird.

(591) *MOTACILLA PERSONATA*.

Motacilla personata, Gould, B. of Asia, pt. xiii.

The masked Wagtail (*Motacilla alba* of my first paper, Ibis, 1879, p. 448) was abundant and was breeding throughout May and June. On the 5th June I found a nest in an exactly similar position to that described above. It contained five young birds, which had been hatched a few days. On returning to the nest on the 28th of the same month the young had flown, and a second laying of three eggs was in the nest. In course of preserving the female which I shot I found in her a fourth egg, ready for laying. Another nest was placed in a recess under a large stone near the edge of the water.

At Shalofzan, in the Kurrum valley, in June I saw a pair of black-backed Wagtails, probably *M. luzoniensis*.

(597) *ANTHUS TRIVIALIS*.

Alda trivialis, Linn. Syst. Nat. i. p. 288. no. 5 (1766, ex Brisson).

Only one pair seen in the Hariab district, the female of which was shot on the 5th May.

(604) AGRODROMA JERDONI.

Agrodroma jerdoni, Finsch, Trans. Z. S. vii. p. 197.

Corydalla griseorufescens, Hume, Ibis, 1870, p. 286.

Agrodroma sordida, Rüpp. apud Jerdon, B. of Ind. ii. p. 236.

The only specimen of *Agrodroma* which I preserved in Afghanistan agrees closely with others from Upper Scinde (*Blanford*), Kashmir (*Jerdon*), and one in the Tweeddale collection marked N.W. India. These four specimens have not the secondaries and wing-coverts margined with rufous, nor have they the lower surface deep fulvous, as depicted in Mr. Hume's plate (Lah. to Yark. pl. xxi.); but these parts are of a light fulvous or ochre-fulvous, as Dr. Finsch describes them (*loc. cit.*). They have the breast-striations barely indicated, and strongly resemble the Abyssinian specimens Nos. 1571 and 1794 (but *vide* Ibis, 1869, p. 437) referred to by Dr. Finsch (*loc. cit.*), and which are in my possession. These are true *A. sordida*, Rüpp.

All the other specimens I have in my collection from N.W. India generally agree with Mr. Hume's plate above referred to, but not with the Afghan bird. The only marked difference between my Afghan and Kashmir birds and true *A. sordida* from Abyssinia is that they possess the fulvous spot at the tip of the second tail-feather, as, indeed, do all specimens from N. India. Mr. Hume is, I think, mistaken in saying that *A. sordida*, Rüpp., has no striæ on the breast. Both the Abyssinian specimens I have referred to are striated, faintly it is true, but still more distinctly than many birds from N.W. India.

This large Pipit is common on the slopes of the Safed Koh. I found the nest on the 22nd June under a small bush at the foot of a rock. It was neatly let into the ground, and contained three eggs, which I regret not being able to describe, as my collection of eggs has not yet arrived from India.

(638) LOPHOPHANES MELANOLOPHUS.

Parus melanolophos, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 23.

Agrees with other examples from the Himalayas (Simla, Darjeeling).

Iris red-brown ; bill black ; legs dark brown.

This is by far the commonest Tit in the pine-forests, and has all the habits of a true *Parus*. It was breeding in May and June ; but I did not obtain its eggs. The only two nests found contained young birds.

(640) *LOPHOPHANES RUFONUCHALIS*, Blyth.

This species is by no means so abundant as the last, with which it often associates, but still may be called common. It was breeding in May. The *Lophophanes beavani* of my last paper (Ibis, 1879, pp. 445, 448) is this bird.

I have observed it up to 10,000 feet on the Safed-Koh.

Iris bright brown ; bill black ; legs slate-colour.

Mr. Hume has pointed out (Lah. to Yark. p. 229) an apparent error in Dr. Jerdon's description of this bird. Dr. Jerdon, however, appears to have copied the words "with a rufous tinge on the back and belly" from Blyth's original description (J. A. S. B. xviii. p. 810).

It is certain that no such tinge is observable in my Afghan birds, nor in any of my Himalayan or Kashmir examples, of *L. rufonuchalis*, presuming that Mr. Hume and I are right in our identifications.

(645) *PARUS CINEREUS*, Vieillot.

The Grey Tit was very common and was breeding in May and June.

(660) *CORVUS CULMINATUS*.

Corvus culminatus, Sykes, P. Z. S. 1832, p. 96 ; Sharpe, Cat. B. iii. p. 20.

This is the only Crow observed in the Hariab valley, and it is very abundant there. It was nesting in the pine trees near our camp at Byan Kheyl in May. In the Kurrum valley, in fact, immediately you arrive at the foot of the eastern slope of the Peiwar Kotul, you find a Raven (*Corvus corax*, Linn., vel *lawrencei*, Hume) and the common Indian Crow (*C. splendens*, Vieill.), both common.

Bill from gape 2·2 inches.

(667) *NUCIFRAGA MULTIPUNCTATA*.

Nucifraga multipunctata, Gould, Birds of Asia, pt. i.

I saw three Nutcrackers one day on the Peiwar Kotul, which I believe belonged to this species.

(668 *bis*) *PICA RUSTICA*.

Corvus rusticus, Scop. Ann. I. Hist. Nat. p. 38.

Pica bactriana, Bonap. Consp. Gen. Av. p. 383 (Afghanistan).

Pica sericea, Gould, P. Z. S. 1845, p. 2, "China" = (*P. media*, Blyth, J. A. S. B. xiii. p. 303, "Andes").

The common Magpie is excessively abundant in Afghanistan, and was breeding throughout May and June. In July numbers of young birds were brought into camp by the soldiers and caged.

It may be mentioned that it is not without a careful examination of a considerable series of Magpies from Europe and Asia that I have followed Mr. Dresser (B. of Europe) and Mr. Sharpe (Cat. B. vol. iii. p. 62) in uniting all the above species, which several authorities hold to be distinct.

With reference to *Pica bottanensis* I am not able to speak from my own experience; and it would appear that Dresser had not examined a specimen from Bhootan in preparing his article (*tom. cit.*). Mr. Hume (Lah. to Yark. p. 241) seems confident of its specific distinction.

(684) *ACRIDOTHERES TRISTIS* (Linn.).

Unknown in the Hariab valley, although abounding a few miles away on the far side of the Peiwar range. It is particularly abundant in the Kurrum valley.

Acridotheres fuscus of my first paper (Ibis, 1879, p. 448) is this species.

(687) *STURNIA PAGODARUM* (Gmel.).

Never seen but once, when I saw a flock on some willow trees. They were evidently passing through; for they were never seen again.

(706) *PASSER INDICUS*, J. & S.

The common House-sparrow of the Hariab valley. The Sparrows fly about in large flocks of sometimes two hundred to three hundred birds, of which about ten per cent. are *P. salicicola*.

In the Kurrum valley, which is separated from the Hariab only by the small spur of the Peiwar, *P. montanus* is the common Sparrow; at least such was the case in July, only a few *Passer indicus* being visible.

(707) *PASSER SALICICOLA*.

Passer hispaniolensis, Temm. Man. d'Orn. i. p. 353 (1820).

Passer salicicola (Vieill.), apud Jerdon, B. of Ind. ii. p. 364.

In the Tweeddale collection is a magnificent specimen, labelled Asia Minor, 12th May, which has the black of the upper surface descending over the rump onto the tail-coverts. This, I take it, must be the full breeding-plumage; but all my Afghan specimens which were shot in the same month agree with a Spanish specimen in having the rump and upper tail-coverts brown. Further, the Asia-Minor skin has the bar on the lesser wing-coverts pure white, as well as the striations on the back, while the Afghan birds and the Spanish one above mentioned have the same parts creamy white (see also Hume, Ibis, 1868, p. 240).

I am under the impression that the female of *P. salicicola* may always, or nearly so, be distinguished from the female of *P. indicus* by its greater size and more massive bill. *P. salicicola*, female, has also the back not so rufous, and has a large but faint black patch on the throat. During the months of May and June, when I used to shoot sometimes a dozen in an afternoon, I have never found any difficulty in separating the females of the two species.

Another way in which the two may be distinguished (in addition to Mr. Hume's distinctions, *loc. cit.*), which I have omitted above, is that in *P. salicicola* not only the shafts of the feathers of the lower tail-coverts are dusky, but also a large portion of either web, forming an arrow-headed patch, whilst in *P. indicus*, female, the shaft only is dusky.

(710) *PASSER MONTANUS* (Linn.).

Kurrum valley. Not observed in Hariab.

(714) *EMBERIZA STRACHEYI*.

Emberiza stracheyi, Moore, P. Z. S. 1855, p. 215, pl. 112.

I follow Mr. Dresser (B. of E. pt. 12) in keeping this species separate from *Emberiza cia*. My Afghan specimens are identical with those from Northern India in the collection of the late Lord Tweeddale, showing no white tips to the wing-coverts—a constant difference between the two species, as pointed out by Mr. Dresser (*op. cit.*).

The White-necked Bunting, as Jerdon calls it, is found on all the lower pine-clad slopes of the Safed-Koh, as well as of the Peiwar spur. It does not seem to affect the open country, where *Emberiza stewarti* is so very abundant. I found it breeding on the 19th June at the foot of the Peiwar Kotul at about 8000 feet.

(718) *EMBERIZA STEWARTI*.

Euspiza stewarti, Blyth, J. A. S. B. xxiii. p. 215.

Specimens from the Hariab valley agree with others from Northern India.

In the full summer-plumage the head is ashy white above, the cheeks, ear-coverts, and upper breast being pure white; the superciliary streak and throat jet-black; the back, rump, and pectoral band bright reddish chestnut, unspotted. In the winter the head and back become greyish brown, each feather dark-shafted, sparingly splashed with chestnut; the upper breast becomes smoky grey, a small spot under the throat only remaining pure white; the pectoral band becomes narrower and mottled with smoke-grey. The chestnut uropygium and upper tail-coverts remain unchanged.

This Bunting began to breed towards the end of April; and during the months of May and June I found great numbers of their nests. They were almost all situated under roots on sloping banks or hill-sides, and were composed entirely of dried grass. The eggs were generally four in number; but I have found five. They vary exceedingly, both in size and colour, in different nests—some sittings being pale blue thickly spotted with purplish brown, and with a few irregular bunting-like blotches and dashes. In another nest

the eggs were much larger and coloured greyish white, profusely spotted and speckled with red-brown, and with the usual blotches deep purplish brown.

This is by far the commonest of the three Buntings which occur in the district, being everywhere abundant in the open country. One pair built their nest within a few yards of my tent, which was on the outer edge of our camp at Byan Kheyl, in the Hariab valley. The note is a feeble imitation of that of our English Yellowhammer, being neither so loud nor so prolonged.

(722) *EUSPIZA LUTEOLA*.

Euspiza luteola, Sparrm. Mus. Carlson. ii. pl. 93.

An exceedingly common species in Afghanistan.

I cannot find any account of the nidification of this Bunting, which breeds so plentifully in the Hariab valley. The first nest found was on the 19th June, and I was somewhat surprised that neither nest nor eggs were at all like those of other Buntings. The nest in question was built in a small bush about $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet from the ground; it was cup-shaped, and composed of dried grass, stalks of plants, shreds of juniper bark, and lined with a few goat's hairs. It contained four eggs of a pale bluish-white colour, finely spotted with purplish stone-colour, the spots becoming larger at the thicker end; the eggs not having arrived from India, I cannot give their exact dimensions.

(725) *HESPERIPHONA ICTERIOIDES*.

Coccothraustes icteroides, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 8.

I shot a male specimen, one of a pair, on the Peiwar range at about 9000 feet.

Iris reddish brown, bill apple-green (*yellow?* Jerdon), legs caraneous.

This pair was evidently breeding.

(728) *MYCEROBAS CARNEIPES* (Hodgs.).

I only observed one pair, which I shot among the deodars near the camp at Byan Kheyl on the 30th April.

Iris hair-brown ; maxilla brownish horn-colour, mandible whitish horn-colour ; legs fleshy brown.

These specimens agree with Himalayan examples.

(738) *CARPODACUS ERYTHRINUS* (Pall.).

The scarlet Grosbeak is not very abundant in our district ; but I found it occasionally in small parties in May and the early part of June, afterwards in pairs. A male shot at Shalofzan in the Kurrum valley was apparently breeding ; for the testes were much enlarged.

(741) *PROPASSER RHODOCHLAMYS*.

Pyrrhula rhodochlamys, Brandt, Bulletin de l'Acad. de St. Pétersbourg, 1843, p. 27.

I only saw this species upon one occasion, when I shot a male out of a pair in the pine-forest on the Peiwar range at 8800 feet.

The iris was light brown ; bill greyish brown, mandible albescent ; legs pinkish brown.

(749) *CARDUELIS CANICEPS*.

Carduelis caniceps, Vigors, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 23.

Not uncommon. I have seen it associating with *Metoponia pusilla*.

(751) *METOPONIA PUSILLA* (Pallas).

Plentiful in the Hariab district, and remained in flocks until the early part of June, when they commenced to breed. I found a nest on the Peiwar range, which was placed near the extremity of a deodar branch about four feet from the ground, it was composed of dried weeds and strips of bark, and lined with feathers and goat's hair. Only one egg was in the nest, of a delicate bluish white, speckled at the thicker end with minute reddish-brown spots.

(761) *CALANDRELLA BRACHYDACTYLA* (Leisl.).

In small parties until the end of May, after which time I did not observe them.

(767) *ALAUDA GULGULA*.

Alauda gulgula, Franklin, P. Z. S. 1831, p. 119.

The Indian Sky-Lark was plentiful in the Hariab district,

where it was nesting in June. I only preserved one specimen, which, however, agrees well with Indian specimens.

Wing 3.75 inches.

(784) *PALUMBUS CASIOTIS*, Bonaparte.

Columba palumbus, Linn. ap. Blyth, J. A. S. B. 1845, p. 865.

The Himalayan Cushat is not generally common in the Hariab district. In one spot, however, in the pine-forest between the main range of the Safed-Koh and the village of Ali Kheyl a large flock could always be found in the month of April. By the middle of the next month they had all paired. I found several nests, but was not able to obtain the eggs.

(788) *COLUMBA* sp. inc.

I regret that I was unable to bring home any skins of the Rock-pigeon of Afghanistan; for I am now unable to say for certain to which species it belongs. I at first identified it with *C. rupestris*, Pall., but subsequently came to the conclusion, from the great variation in plumage in large numbers shot by the officers, that they were nearly all hybrids from intermixture with the tame pigeons of the villages.

TURTUR FERRAGO.

Columba pulchrata, Hodgs. in Gray's Zool. Misc. p. 85 sine descr. (1831).

Columba ferrago, Eversmann, Add. ad Zoogr. Ross.-As. iii. p. 17 (1842).

Turtur vitticollis, Hodgs., apud Hend. & Hume (Lah. to Yark. p. 274).

Turtur pulchrata, Hodgs., apud Hume, S. F. vi. p. 421; Legge, B. of Ceylon.

Turtur orientalis (Lath.), apud Dresser, B. of E. pt. lv.

It seems to me that Eversmann was the first author who applied a name to an Asiatic Turtledove which is distinctly described as having the tips of the rectrices white. The last few words of his description, however, which terminates as follows, "*rectricibus apice albis, exceptis duabus mediis totis albis*," are not quite intelligible to my mind. If the specimen he described had the two centre tail-feathers entirely white, it must have been an accidental variety, but of the white-, and

not of the slaty-under-tail-coverts form. Failing the adoption of Eversmann's title, a new one would be required.

On examining a large series of the Asiatic representatives of our common European Turtle dove (*Turtur auritus*), I find that I can only in part concur in Mr. Dresser's view ('B. of Europe') that there are not three species in Asia.

The form which has the lower tail-coverts, the outer margins of the outer pair of rectrices, and the tips of all pure white, should, I think, be considered worthy of specific distinction; but all the other birds, which have these parts of various shades of ashy-grey, belong, I think, to one species, which must stand under the title of *Turtur orientalis* (Lath.). In Japan a large race occurs (*Columba gelastes*, Temm.); and in the Indo-Burmese region a generally smaller race is found (? ♀ *C. meena*, Sykes), which has the lower tail-coverts of a still deeper shade of ashy: but still in point of size both these races run into one another; that is to say, some birds from Burma (I am writing of adults) are as large, or nearly so, as the largest from Japan, and, again, a few Japanese specimens are as small as the average Burmese ones.

Captain Vincent Legge states (*op. cit.*), "Latham unfortunately does not say what colour the under tail-coverts of his *T. orientalis* were." He certainly does not in the 'Index Ornithologicus'; but in the 'General Synopsis of Birds,' ii. pt. 2, p. 647, published in 1783, he describes "La tourterelle brune de la Chine" as having the "under tail-coverts pale cinereous grey."

Pallas's description of his *Columba rupicola* reads as follows:—"C. fusca, plumis gryseo-marginatis, subtus dilutior, rectricibus lateralibus extremo cinerascens." There can be little doubt to what species this refers; but Gmelin's description of *Cenas nigra*, given on the same page, is that of a pigeon, and not of a Turtle dove at all, although Pallas gives the latter title as a synonym of *Columba rupicola*.

If my view of the case be considered by ornithologists to be the correct one, the synonymy of the species with ashy lower tail-coverts will run as follows:—

La tourterelle brune de la Chine, Lath. Gen. Syn. Birds, ii. pt. 2, p. 647, ex Sonn. (1783).

Columba orientalis, Lath. Ind. Orn. ii. p. 606, ex Sonn. (1790).

Columba rupicola, Pall. Zoogr. Rosso.-As. i. p. 566 (1811).

Columba meena, Sykes (partim), P. Z. S. p. 149 (1832).

Columba agricola, Tickell, J. A. S. B. ii. p. 581 (1833).

Columba gelastes, Temm. Pl. Col. 550 (1838).

Columba (Turtur) gelastes, Temm. et Schleg. Faun. Jap. pl. 60 B (1850).

Columba viticollis major, Temm., fide Bp. Consp. Gen. Av. ii. p. 60 (1857).

Columba viticollis minor, Temm., fide Bp. loc. cit.

Turtur meena, Sykes, ap. Jerd. B. of I. iii. p. 476.

Columba gelastes, Temm. et Schleg., apud Middend. Sib. Reise, Vögel, p. 189.

Columba (Peristera) turtur, L., var. *gelastes*, Temm., apud Schrenck, Vögel des Amurlandes, p. 389.

(796) *TURTUR RISORIUS* (Linn.).

Observed for the first time on the 10th June. Not nearly so abundant as the last species.

(802) *PTEROCLES EXUSTUS*, Temm. ?

I saw a pair of Sandgrouse at the same hour on three successive evenings flying over the camp in the same direction.

(809) *LOPHOPHORUS IMPEYANUS* (Lath.).

Several people told me that they had seen Monauls on the Safed Koh and the Peiwar range; and the natives said that there were plenty of them; but I was unfortunate in never seeing one. Several officers had bought skins from the natives, I was told.

(819) *FRANCOLINUS PICTUS*, J. & S.

Occurs close to our district; but I have never seen or heard of it actually in the valley.

(820) *CACCABIS CHUKAR*, J. E. Gray.

Scarce. I obtained one nest on the 16th June. In the Kurrum valley the Seesee, *Ammoperdix bonhami*, was com-

mon, and *Ortygornis ponticeriana* occurs; for I saw one in a cage in the camp of the 5th Punjab Native Infantry.

(873) *RHYNCHÆA CAPENSIS* (Linn.).

Captain Cook, V.C. of the 5th Goorkhas, informed me that he had shot a Painted Snipe in the month of January near Kurrum.

(893) *TRINGOIDES HYPOLEUCUS* (Linn.).

A few pairs were about the river in May.

IV.—*Notes upon some West-Indian Birds.*

By P. L. SCLATER, M.A., Ph.D., F.R.S.

(Plate I.)

MR. LAWRENCE'S series of papers upon the birds obtained for the Smithsonian collection by Mr. F. A. Ober during his visits to the islands of Barbuda, Antigua, Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, St. Vincent, and Grenada*, have greatly added to our acquaintance with the avifauna of the Lesser Antilles. I have on previous occasions† lamented the deficiency of our knowledge in this respect, and may offer our American brethren our congratulations on their discoveries in a field which, seeing that most of the islands belong to the colonial possessions of Great Britain, ought to have been occupied by us long ago. At the same time, English naturalists have done something towards the investigation of the Antillean avifauna since I wrote my article in 1871. With the kind assistance of the Rev. J. E. Semper, I have been able to give some account of the birds of St. Lucia‡; and Mr. Lister's exertions§ have recently added something to our knowledge of the birds of St. Vincent. An examination of the collection made by the last-named gentleman, now in the Museum of the University of Cambridge, and of some of Mr. Ober's

* See Proc. U.S. Nat. Mus. 1878 and 1879.

† See 'Nature,' vol. iv. p. 473 (1871).

‡ See P. Z. S. 1871, p. 263, and 1872, p. 647.

§ See his notes, *antea*, p. 38.